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Shortgrass Country by Monte Noelke

We are going into summer in better shape than normal for the Shortgrass Country! The big drawback of a wet spring is the way the hornflies and other flying and crawling insects abound. Black mosquitoes, face gnats and house flies lost their fear of man so long ago that where once it took a quick draw and fast eye with a good swatter to down one, today there are lots of sitting targets.

I am so wary of the environmentalists that I've been using cider vinegar to hold back the sugar ants off the kitchen drainboard. The vinegar drives the ants away, but it draws fruit flies. The only remedy I've found to use on the fruit flies is to use my big vegetable strainer like a butterfly net and relocate them down at the barn.

My compadres have been making bug fun of how scared I am of the environmentalists. However, I've noticed that ever since the news broke that the Sierra Club has filed an injunction to control our major source of underground water, not much has been said about my phobia.

Anytime those nature guys need a little afternoon sport, they can hit their touch tone telephones a few licks, call up Congress, and have the likes of us standing so far up on our tiptoes that the altitude will make our cowlicks lie down.

Too well, the memory comes back for the lessons we were going to teach them about food production shortly before Mr. Nixon banned the best weapon we had against coyotes at their request.

Now it may be that only cowards use salad vinegars to fight sugar ant and modified tea strainers to corner fruit flies. But more and more, all it takes to start a herder to shaking so hard that he loosens the nails in his boot heels is the mere mention of the words "endangered" or "habitat" attached to a plant or beast.

I haven't been feeling too well since that lawsuit was announced. Late in the evenings, sitting out in the yard, I wonder if the Indians and the buffalo sensed when their end was close at hand.